

Roger F. Sandsted

August 5, 1918 — March 12, 2003

On Wednesday, March 12, 2003, Professor Roger F. Sandsted, 84, of Dutcher Road, Freeville, New York, passed from this world in the same manner he lived his life; in quiet dignity and in gentle poise. Roger was born in Holdrege, Nebraska to the late William and Otelia Sandsted. The family lived on a farm where Roger participated in many of the farming operations. He graduated from the Holdrege High School in 1936 and went to work on the family farm before entering the armed forces just prior to World War II. He joined the Air Corps and became a pilot of a B29, "Superfortress." He flew 30 missions over Japan, while stationed on Tinian Island in the South Pacific. He was discharged from the army in October 1945.

After the war, Roger finished his college studies at the University of Nebraska, College of Agriculture, receiving a B.S. degree in 1948. He continued his education at the University of Minnesota in the Horticulture Department, acquiring a Ph.D. degree in 1954. Roger's first job was at the University of Idaho in the Agriculture Department, where he lived in Parma, Idaho.

He came to Cornell University as an Assistant Professor of Vegetable Crops in 1957. He was elevated to Associate Professor in 1963 and to Professor in 1977. He also held the title of Department Extension Leader from 1976-83. As a research and extension Horticulturist with primary responsibility for legume vegetables, Roger made numerous contributions to the bean industry. He conducted yearly variety and cultural practice trials on snap and dry beans. His keen observations led to the selection and development of the small white bean "Aurora," which was released in 1973, and the black bean "Midnight," which was released in 1980. "Midnight" attracted national attention due to its improved growing characteristics. Another notable accomplishment as a result of his selection and breeding efforts is the red kidney bean "Ruddy." Roger made valuable contributions to the bean industry. The results of his research have been effectively communicated in extension bulletins, newsletter articles, motion pictures, and professional publications noted for their straightforward language. He was a cornerstone of the New York Bean Industry who made his mark on the national level through devoted research and infectious enthusiasm for beans.

He retired from Cornell in 1983 and was named Professor Emeritus. Roger maintained a strong interest in agriculture, establishing many gardens at his home. Roger became a Master Gardener with the Tompkins County Cooperative Extension, helping home gardeners with problems and answering questions. Professionally, he was a member of Alpha Zeta, Alpha Gamma Rho, American Society for Horticultural Science, Bean Improvement

Cooperative and Epsilon Sigma Phi. Roger became a member of the Town of Dryden Historical Society and served on the Board of Trustees. He was chairman of the Collections Committee and was a valued member for many years. Roger was a member of the Presbyterian Church in Dryden and served as a trustee. He was also a longtime member of the Ithaca-Cayuga Rotary Club of Rotary International. For many years, he was a member of the 40th Bomb Group Association, made up of members of the squadron he flew with. He enjoyed many reunions of the group.

He is survived by Gwen, his wife of 54 years; his three sons, Craig (Jane), Jeff (Reenie) and Eric; three grandchildren, Paul, Travis, and Sarah; one brother, Wesley (Dorothy), of Holdrege, Nebraska; cousins, nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by a brother, Raymond and a sister, Helen.

He was known as a kind and generous man who always found time to help others. His quiet, sincere and gentle manner was a calming influence for many and will be remembered by his family, friends and colleagues.

Elmer Ewing, Robert Sweet, Hans C. Wien